



Congressman Greg Walden

Remarks before the House of Representatives

January 23, 2007

GRANT COUNTY, OR

THE IMPACT OF CONGRESS'S FAILURE TO ACT ON THE
SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT

Mr. Speaker. The failure of Congress to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act amounts to a breach of faith to more than 600 forested counties across America.

For Grant County, Oregon, where 61% percent of the land in the county is federal, this means the School District will be forced to eliminate essential school programs and nearly double class sizes, delay school repairs and begin telling teachers, administrators and staff who stays and who goes.

School Superintendent Newell Cleaver puts it this way: "We are watching our infrastructure being destroyed as this issue is debated by the Congress. This program is the difference between rural schools remaining competitive with urban schools or not."

Grant County Commissioner Boyd Britton says, "If the federal government would simply allow us to manage these natural resources, we wouldn't need these funds, however losing these funds will be felt by every man, woman and child in the county, especially the school children."

My colleagues, Congress needs to pass HR 17 and keep the Federal Government's word to timbered communities. Time is running out for them.